

My maternal family has a very elaborate history in America back five generations. It is a very complicated story with my greatgreatgrandfather and his four brothers journeying to America in about 1900 to start it all. The Lai family was fairly well established in China, and when the five brothers came here back then, they naturally did well also. Since the time of the five brothers, the Lai family in America has branched out into six different main sections. This paper will explore the Lai experience in America from the time of the five original brothers to the present.

To start off my report, we shall go back in time to the mid 1800's. At this time, in a village called Len Hong, in Toisan, China, there lived my greatgreatgreatgrandfather. His name was Siu Hong Lai. His situation was truly rare. Very few people in China were as well off as he was, particularly in his region, Toisan. Most of the people there at that time were poor peasants who worked their farms for their livelihood. If they did not have farms, they labored for others. It was a hard life in Toisan, but <sup>Siu Hong Lai</sup> ~~my father~~ was above that, and as time progressed to the early 1900's, he would come to be an even richer man. This was because of the simple fact that at this time, he had five able sons who traveled to America to work. Siu Hong, therefore, was not only a well-off man socioeconomically, he was also the proud father of five adventurous sons. In those days in China, having a son was a rich blessing, and Siu Hong had five. Their names were, in age order, Liu Gin, Liu Yook, Liu Suey, Liu Poy, and Liu Jung. Liu Yook is my greatgreatgrandfather.

How did they come to travel



## Why come to America?

If Liu Hong was such a well-off man, one may ask why his five sons had come to America. It is general knowledge that Chinese men who came to America at that time were generally poorer men in search of wealth for themselves and their families. Society in the Southeastern China region, namely Kwangtung, and including Toisan, was very burdened. China was densely populated with a population five times as dense as that in America. There was only enough land and food for everybody to just get by on. Under these conditions, the people there were obviously very willing to do almost anything, including coming to America. ?

Siu Hong's family may not have been suffering in the 1900's, but they figured that they could and would like to do better. Therefore, Siu Hong's five sons came to America. These five daring adventurerers arrived in America in about 1900 and settled down in a small Chinese section of town in Newark, New Jersey. Within a little while, they were all established in their own businesses. The oldest of them, Liu Gin, ran a laundry. Liu Yook had his own laundry and was a partner in a Chinese grocery store. Liu Suey was the owner and operator of a Chinese restaurant. Liu Poy and Liu Jung both ran laundries. The businesses of these men were typical of the businesses of all Chinese immigrants in America at that time. The Chinese were willing and physically able to work hard, but they lacked the skill and knowledge to pursue anything other than the laundry, restaurant, and grocery businesses. The Chinese in the East Coast at this time mostly did this kind of work, and of the three, laundries were by far the most popular. This fact is illustrated by the fact that four of the five brothers had been in

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the laundry business.

Another reason which has kept many Chinese from pursuing other professions was that of discrimination from white society. Discrimination is why the Chinese grouped together in Chinatowns. White society was both foreign and unbending. A Chinese who had just arrived in Northeast America was helpless and, not knowing the language, would be unable to find a job in White society. Chinatowns provided an insulation from prejudice and discrimination and gave the Chinese companionship and a familiar way of living. Chinatowns, most importantly, gave the Chinese a way to establish himself. It would have been very hard for the five brothers to establish themselves if it were not for help and support from the other Chinese in Chinatown. In fact, all of their businesses, as well as the businesses of other men in Chinatown, were in a large part patronized by Chinese.. It was possible, then, to make a living in America without dealing much with the White man. That is what the typical Chinese immigrant did, and that is what the five brothers did. I have a feeling that with this type of life in America, and with their wives in China, these men, as well as the typical Chinese in the Northeast at that time, had a very strong sojourner mentality. They had really nothing going for themselves here, just their businesses and fellow men in the same situation. Their whole lives were back in China. This sojourner mentality may not have been true for all men at this time, according to Ben Tong, but I know that this was true for my great-grandfather and his brothers.

I had mentioned earlier that the five brothers, as well as



the other men in Chinatown, did not generally associate with Whites, but please note that this does not mean that they were unassimilable. In fact, they were very much so, considering the great amount of prejudice that must have been directed towards them. The five brothers all had western style dress and hair trim. They, as typical Chinese men in the Northeast at that time, were as American as can be considering the fact that they were not given the chance to learn English and get an American education. The main reason for this was prejudice and discrimination. Chinese who came over to work at that time were not given citizenship and could not have brought their families. Racism forced men into small sections of cities called Chinatowns. This treatment of the Chinese made apparent to them that they could never have made it as well as the White man in America. This added to their sojourner mentality.

The five brothers had their minds set on making their money here and going back to China. Unfortunately, though, history has it that only three of the brothers had ever made it back to China alive. Two of the brothers, Liu Gin (the eldest), and Liu Poy (the fourth son) had died in their middle age in Newark. Liu Gin was 46 and Liu Poy was 40. The three living brothers had shipped the bodies of their brothers back to China where they were laid to rest.

Concerning the issue of returning to China to retire, not too many of the men were able to do that. Many could not afford to go back home, thus imprisoned as lonely, unattached men in a foreign land until their deaths. Others who could afford to go back,



may never have because of early deaths, as in the case of Liu Gin and Liu Poy. These men had wanted to go back to China, but unfortunately, they had died before they had had the chance.

The other three, though, did have the chance to go back, and so they did. Of the three brothers who went back, though, my greatgreatgrandfather, Liu Yook, was the most unfortunate. It is said that Liu Yook had believed in fortune tellers. Upon visiting one, he was told that he would die at the age of 60. Believing this to be true, Liu Yook hurried back to China in 1919 at the age of 60 whereupon he actually did die. The other two brothers did have a chance to build nice homes in Toisan and live comfortably until their deaths a few years after their return. Usually, men who did return home, did live comfortably when they arrived home. It is just unfortunate that after so many years of hard work in America, that my greatgreatgrandfather had lived only a few months at home before he died. Even though, he was considered lucky. As mentioned before, many of the men were unable to leave the United States at all, and therefore died in the foreign land.

The deaths and the returning home of the original five brothers was not the end of my maternal family history in America, though. On the contrary, it was only the end of the first phase of a long history here. It seems that all of the five brothers, before leaving for America, had already established families in China. Each of the men had at least one son when they left China. These sons of the five original brothers, as history would have it, had followed their fathers to America as soon as they were pysicaly and legally able to. These sons of the five brothers, numbering



six, though, had a different mission in America. Instead of making money and coming back to China, these men were to plant their roots permanently and become the Lai family's first generation Americans.

The relations of the Lai men in America are as follows:

|                                       | <u>FATHERS</u> | <u>SONS</u>       |                        |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| <u>Five<br/>Original<br/>Brothers</u> | Liu Gin.....   | Bo Hong           |                        |
|                                       | Liu Yook.....  | Gong Tieng        |                        |
|                                       | Liu Suey.....  | Fot Hong, Fot Nan | <u>Six<br/>Cousins</u> |
|                                       | Liu Poy.....   | Gnook Kee         |                        |
|                                       | Liu Jung.....  | Fot Bow           |                        |

The five brothers, in the 1910's, had now had their sons over here. I shall refer to these sons as the six cousins. The six cousins are the second generation Lai to be here, but they were the first generation Americans. The time period in which they were prominent in the United States from the 1910's, when they first came over, until the 1940's and 50's.

It is in the generation of the six cousins in which the Lai family had started to drift apart and get complicated and large. This was quite understandable because of one family of five brothers, the Lai family in the United States now became six different families with each of the six cousins heading their own respective family. From the start, the cousins were very independent from each other. They each had their own businesses or occupations and led very diverse lives. As time progressed, each family got larger a drifted away more. With each generation, there was less awareness in the individual families that some of the others had even existed. Even I did not know my family make-up until only a



few weeks ago in my research.

In researching my report, I have uncovered vague information on each of the Lai families other than my own. Of my own family, I have discovered much information. Therefore, I shall relate what I know of the five other families first and then concentrate the rest of the Lai on my own family.

I shall start with the history of the eldest of the five original brothers, Liu Gin, and work my way in age order.

*Hawaii* Liu Gin, a laundryman, had brought his son, Bo Hong, to America in the 1910's as all of the rest of the men did. Bo Hong's occupation was not typical of Chinese immigrants here, though. He was a truck driver and he delivered restaurant and laundry supplies to businesses in the New York City area. He had brought his wife here, as did the other cousins, and had had four children born in the United States. Note that this was in the 1920's. The names of the children are George, Lucy, John, and Edward. George, is now some sort of technical person working for the General Electric Company out in Hawaii. Lucy, has since been married to an architect named Eugene Gee and is presently living in Albany, New York. John is now an industrial designer who lives in Douglaston, New York. Finally, Edward, as far as I know, is/was in some kind of technical field and is now residing in Astoria, New York. As far as the children of these four people, I only know that George has three, and Lucy has four.

Liu Suey was the only one of the five original brothers in the restaurant business. He had brought his two sons here to the United States, and in turn, they had also devoted their lives to



restaurants. Fot Hong had three children who were all born in the United States. They are Mei Yuet, Harold, and Robert. I do not know what happened to Mei Yuet, but Harold is now a dentist who, incidentally, attended one of his undergraduate years at Brown University in the early 1940's. Robert is also a professional now. He is a lawyer now. Harold has two children and Robert has four. I presume that they all make their homes in New Jersey. As for Fot Nan, he has one son who was adopted in China. This son, Bok Lum, is an immigrant here and is now working in the same restaurant that his father had worked in before. Bok Lum is a third generation Chinese American restaurant man in New Jersey. I am not sure if that is typical, but it certainly is interesting and credible. Bok Lum had four children.

Liu Poy had brought his son, Gnook Kee, over to the United States to become a laundryman. Gnook Kee now has/had a laundry in the Bronx for some time now. He has four children; 2 daughters and 2 boys. All were born in China. The first daughter, Big Har, is married and has two children. The other daughter has six children.. As far as I know, the two daughters are still in China. The first boy, Wing Ing, had immigrated to America where he now has three children. Wing Ing owns a laundromat. The last child also immigrated here. He is/was a building superintendent, and he has four children. Gnook Kee, and my greatgrandfather, are the only two of the six cousins who are still alive.

Fot Bow, Liu Jung's son, worked in laundries and stores in New York Chinatown.. He and his wife had four children born in China. All four of them are now immigrants here from China. Fot



Bow's two sons work in Chinatown now, one in a drugstore and one in a supply house.

It is obviously apparent that each of the family's of the six cousins have gone their separate ways. The cousins themselves had lifestyles which prompted this. The occupations of the six cousins ranged from the typical laundry and restaurant man to the not-so-typical truck driver. Some of the cousins went back to China to have children and come back to the United States, some remained here to have them. Generally, the children of the men who stayed here to have them (in other words, the American born), have grown up to have more "American" jobs and lives. They became the industrial designer, the lawyer, and the dentist. Their families are now very americanized, and in general, are fairly well off. In observing the children of the cousins who went to China to have them (the Chinese born), we find that upon arriving in the United States as immigrants, they had to start American life from scratch. They have/have had to work as laundrymen and restaurant workers which is exactly what their fathers had done before them.

In looking at the courses that each of these five families have taken, we see many diversities. However, all of these diversities in occupation, lifestyle, and history, are generally typical of Chinese American families. For instance, Fot Hong's children were American born. They are now professionals. This is typical. Fot Nan's child was born in China and immigrated here. He now works in a restaurant. This is also typical. It is interesting to note that Fot Hong and Fot Nan were brothers and that their respective families have grown so far apart in terms of history and socio-



economic background.

I shall now spend the remainder of the rest of this part of my paper on my own part of the family. My greatgrandfather, Liu Yook, is the brother of the original five who is the patriarch of my line. Liu Yook had two sons in China in the late 1800's. Their names are Gong Bo and Gong Tieng. When Liu Yook came to America in about 1900, he had brought Gong Bo. However, when his son went back to China to have a family, a sickness struck him and he died. Liu Yook's remaining son, Gong Tieng, was therefore depended on to carry on the mission in America.

At this point, I should like to re-emphasize that the Lai family, particularly Liu Yook's family, was still a very well-off family in China. A major reason for the retention of wealth in the Lai family was that the Lai men had all come to America to work. Liu Yook's family, as well as those of the other five brothers had probably seen that this was true and therefore expected their sons to go to America also, in order to keep up the socioeconomic status of the family. In Liu Yook's family, the only son was, at that time, Gong Tieng, and in 1917, he arrived in America. At the time of his departure from China, he was twenty-two and had a wife and four sons.

When Gong Tieng arrived in America, he immediately set to work with his father in his laundry. It was long, hard, work. Gong Tieng and his father spent approximately 12-15 hours a day in the laundry. Washing and ironing was tedious work. In about two years, in 1919, Liu Yook had gone back to China to die, believing what a fortune teller had told him about his death. When his father went



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home, Gong Tieng had stopped his laundry work and went to New York Chinatown to open a haberdashery.

In his time, my greatgrandfather had owned the haberdashery, a wetwash, a gift shop, and a grocery store. During his life, he had lived through Chinatown from bachelor society days up until present. When he was asked how he felt about his life here, he answered that he is very happy with his family situation. He is happy that he has helped to produce such a large and successful family in America. Talking about the old days, he agrees that life was hard for him and that he had worked from 12-15 hours a day in his businesses, but that did not seem to bother him that much. Concerning his leisure activities, he had gambled some, but it was not to any great extent. After all, he had brought his family here. On the issue of discrimination from White society, he claims that he had felt none. Chinatown did a very good job of insulating prejudices from the Chinese. In fact, he had had very few associations with whites in his time, and this exposure was generally through their patronizing of his businesses. Overall, I think that he has enjoyed his life very much. I do not think that he has any qualms about his life. At present, he seems to be enjoying his retirement very much.

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Concerning assimilation, my greatgrandfather has assimilated very much, I feel, into American society, at least as much as society had allowed him to. I must re-emphasize that even back in the 1900's and 1910's, the Chinese were in full American dress and hairstyle. This helps point to the conclusion that Chinese were assimilable even in those days. One important thing to note is that the six



cousins had brought their wives and families here, supporting the fact that at least some men had planned to make America their home from the start. If these men could not assimilate and become Americans, there was hope that their children would. I have been told that Gong Tieng had tried to learn English when he first arrived here. This is a definite support of the idea that at least he had tried to learn how to speak with Whites. As far as I know, perhaps all of the Lai men had tried to learn English. Unfortunately, though, Gong Tieng never learned the language. He and many other men who had tried could not possibly have, and with good reason. The men back in the 1910's, as well as present-day immigrants had to work very hard and long hours for their money and may not have had time and strength at the end of their work day to study English.

In 1919, as mentioned before, Liu Yook went back to China to retire. He and his two remaining brothers at that time, did this, leaving the businesses in America with their sons. The sons kept the money coming in while the men enjoyed a nice retirement in China. Long after Liu Yook's death in 1919, Gong tieng's mother, his wife, and son were doing quite well with the money he was sending home. They had a relatively easy life with always two or three servant girls around the house to do the menial chores. It was sweet for the Lai family in China and sweat for Gong Tieng in America. However, this was the way it was done, and if they were not in this situation, they would probably be in one worse.

For all that hard work, though, the money was coming in quite fast. Gong Tieng had enough money to go back to China in 1924 to visit for a while and come back to America in 1928. A Chinese had



to be successful in order to do this. When Gong Tieng had returned from his trip to China, he still had the haberdashery but closed it in 1930 to open a wetwash in the Bronx. This wetwash had collapsed, though, but by that time, my great grandfather had already opened a gift shop in New York City.

It is now that I shall reveal his involvement in the On-Leong Merchant Association. I am unsure when On-Leong came into his life. It could well possibly have been when he had opened his haberdashery, but the truth of the matter is that they came to him and they forced him to join.

On-Leong and the other New York City Merchant Association, Hip Sing, are strong organizations which are sometimes called tongs. Once a man opens a business of any kind, he is forced to join one. The deal is, a businessman pays his dues and he will get protection for his business. If a businessman does not, there can be many ways that a powerful organization can harm him. Usually, if you are a businessman, you join a tong, at least back in those days of the 1900's to 1940's when the tongs were very powerful. Back then, there were far fewer Chinese businesses in Chinatown, and in America in general, so that everyone in the area knew who you were and what your business was. You just had to belong to something. Also, at that time, it was a bachelor society so that such organizations could very easily have come into power and become very influential. Nowadays, the tongs' powers have declined somewhat, though they are still powerful. They have declined because there are too many people with too many businesses now, less than half of which belong to any tong at all. Today, if you do not belong to a tong, it may



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not matter much, but when my greatgrandfather joined On-Leong, he had to. It was the expected thing to do.

During this time at around 1931, Gong Tieng's family had been doing fairly well. However, no matter how well they were living, they could not have escaped three tragedies. Gong Tieng and his wife had had four sons. Two were twins. By 1931, all but one of them had died. The sole surviving son is my grandfather, Wing Doon.

Because Wing Doon was the surviving son, and because sons were highly valued in China, Wing Doon was very much prized and well taken care of. The family had always had two or three servant girls at a time so that no one in the family ever had to work very hard, including Wing Doon. Wing Doon had a very carefree childhood.

When Gong Tieng's wife had decided to go to America to be with her husband in 1932, Wing Doon was at the tender age of 16, too young to be separated from his mother. Wing Doon's grandmother, though, could not be separated from him. This was a dilemma. It was solved in the following manner. Gong Tieng's wife would come to America as planned, and Wing Doon would stay in China with his grandmother. There was one provision, though, Wing Doon's mother had arranged his marriage with a girl 15 years of age. Therefore, when his mother came to America to be with her husband, Wing Doon was a married man of 16, responsible for his new family of wife and grandmother. This may have been a little too early for such strong responsibilities. Then again, however, back then marriages were arranged and people did marry at around that age.

The scene is now 1932 and we are in New York Chinatown with a young reunited couple. Gong Tieng and his wife were now alone



with no family in America. The scene was set for a new American life. In 1932, Gong Tieng's wife was one of only 6 Chinese women in New York Chinatown. Gong Tieng and his wife must have been very happy together in Chinatown. They had each other and they were in America doing fairly well for Chinese immigrants at that time. Their family in China was also doing well so there was no need to worry about them except maybe sending some money over once in a while. Before long, Gong Tieng and his wife had begun a new family. In a few years, Gong Tieng's family had included three children in the United States.

Wing Doon, their son in China, was also doing very well. He had attended the Way Jong High School there and was going on to medical school. At around this time, he had also begun a family of his own. He had one son and two daughters. Nothing could have been better for the Lai family in the 1930's. In addition, Wing Doon would soon be coming over to America to join the family. Wing Doon had arrived in America in 1940.

However, just as times were brightest, the dark shadow of World War III had fell upon them. In 1940, China had been in war with Japan for a while now, but close relatives and friends had escaped death and were generally away from most of the war. It was safe in America, but the tragedy was that Wing Doon had been drafted into the United States military. It was quite a shock because Wing Doon had only just arrived. Within a few short months of his arrival in New York City, he was drafted into the Army Air Corps. Not knowing a word of English, he was sent to Fort Benning in Georgia where he went through basic training. After that, Wing



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Doon was shipped to Burma where, during his years in the war, he drove trucks between Burma and India.. My grandfather considered himself very lucky, though. He survived World War II as a Private First Class in the United States Air Corps. I remember my grandfather telling me about some of his friends from Chinatown who also got drafted, but were sent to Germany and Italy instead. They were all killed.

I feel that the deaths of these men in Germany and Italy is a tragic shame. It is not fair that a young man who invested so much to come to America should get drafted and killed. It is not right that a man should die for a country that for so many years has treated him and his countrymen so cruelly. It is not right that a man should come here and toil 12-15 hours a day in a Chinese laundry or restaurant, come home everyday to an empty, lonely, old apartment, and be away from his loved ones in China (Who incidentally depended on him for their livelihood) and be drafted by the military and sent to war and killed. for a country he may not have even been a citizen of. It is unfair that a man who does not speak a word of English should be trained and made to serve in an army that only speaks English. It is equally unfair if the newly drafted Chinese immigrant is physically on a lower par with his "fellow American soldiers" because they had grown up with three meals a day and the Chinese immigrant with less than half that much. How is the man going to survive a war when he is so handicapped? My grandfather was lucky. He was given an honorable discharge in 1946. On the otherhand, maybe he was not. I believe that he became an alcoholic during his war days. He also began to smoke. These two undesirable



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habits, coupled with his diabetes, eventually led to his death in 1974.

As we continue with Wing Doon's story, he was discharged from the service in 1946 at the age of 30. At that time, Chinese American veterans were given citizenship and the right to bring their families from China to live in the United States. In 1946, therefore, large American transport ships went to Shanghai where the families of the war veterans were waiting. Wing Doon's family was there waiting for him. His family at that time consisted of my uncle Richard, my aunt Lai Hing, and my mother Shiu Hing. For some unexplained reason, though, only Wing Doon's wife came on board the ship to come to America. Shiu Hing and Lai Hing were left in China. The reason why is unknown to me. It may have been because their grandmother, who had been raising them, wished them to stay with her in China.

For now, we shall return to New York City in 1951. Gong Tieng's branch of the Lai family in America had grown to be 12 members strong. There was Gong Tieng's family of himself, his wife, Wing Doon, Mirian, Alvin, and George. Then, there was Wing Doon's own family in America which consisted of himself, his wife, uncle Richard, aunt Betty, aunt Helen, aunt Anna, and uncle Jerry. My mother and Lai Hing were still in Toisan living with their mother's mother. Wing Doon and his wife, Ng Shiu, though, had always regularly sent money to their daughters with the wishes that someday, they would be able to come to America.

In the 1950's, the two families had two businesses, the gift shop which opened in 1930, and a new grocery store opened in just



1950. The gift shop was solely Gong Tieng's, but the grocery store was shared by both him and Wing Doon. From then on until the late 1960's, life for both families was pretty happy and normal. Gong Tieng's children were either in college or working. Wing Doon's offspring were children in a safe, clean, Chinatown. Work was hard for Wing Doon and Gong Tieng, but then, everyone like them worked hard. The children were young and healthy and very American yet still Chinese. Work was hard, but life was worth it. It was the 1950's and all of America was healthy and in good spirits. Towards the end of the decade, Shiu Hing and Lai Hing in Hong Kong were getting married. Nothing could have been finer. In 1961, Shiu Hing and her husband Yeng Fun Leung had come to America to be with the family. To top the period off, in 1961, both Lai Hing and Shiu Hing had given birth to their first children. Gong Tieng was now a greatgrandfather and Wing Doon a proud grandfather.

In 1964, Gong Tieng decided to retire and shut down his gift shop. He gave his share of the grocery store to Wing Doon who converted it to a coffee shop. The major reason for his retirement, though, is that he could not get any goods or merchandise from the mainland anymore. So, in 1964, Gong Tieng retired, and Wing Doon had a coffee shop named Hong Ming. The order of things seems to have changed, but life was still in good order, or so it seemed. In actuality, though, it was the year 1964 and these changes which took place in that year, that marked the beginning of the decline of good times for the Lai family, especially for Gong Tieng and Wing Doon. The Gong Tieng 'clan' of the Lai family in America was getting large and splitting up. Gong Tieng's children were married



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and away. It was now only him and his wife. They were old and had only each other now. Wing Doon's kids were either married away or always out. The coffee shop was hard to run for my grandfather and grandmother. Their children did try hard to help out, but that was not enough. Life was hard in earlier times for Wing Doon, but his situation at this time was extremely so. His wife, Ng Shiu, had developed a kidney problem and was hospitalized for a while. There was no adequate help for the shop and no business. Wing Doon was also losing his health, having been a long time smoker and alcoholic. The Hong Ming shop had to close in 1968, and Wing Doon, only a middle aged man in his late forties was getting lonely and depressed. Chinatown, in general, was also getting a little dirtier and a little more dangerous as street gangs were coming into play. All this, and especially the fact that his family and business were gone, truly crushed the man.

I really feel for my <sup>GRAND</sup>father very much, especially picturing him in this part of his life. He loved me very much and spoiled me when I was small. But as I got a bit older, I always wanted to be with my uncle and aunts. I was naive and very "Americanized". I liked my uncle and aunts because they were "Americanized" also. I shyed away from my grandfather. He was Chinese. I remember vaguely, desperate moments of love when he used to watch me for my parents when I was small. We would be alone in his apartment in Chinatown, and I would watch television instead of talk to him. He would come up to me and set me down in front of him and say, "I love you," in Chinese. I would not really understand. I had forgotten too much of my Chinese. He would see that and ~~he~~ would try to explain even more.



I would get the message but would not know how to respond. He would give up and I would return watching television. I was unwittingly, a cruel child, but I know that I was not the only young American Chinese to treat his elders like that. It was typical to have this kind of age and culture barrier, especially among the Chinese immigrant family <sup>WHERE</sup> ~~in which~~ the children were growing up as Americans.

In a couple of years, it would be 1972, and the situation would be worse. Wing Doon now worked in a shirt factory pressing shirts. He could not stand that kind of work. He was also a diabetic. He had cirrhosis. He was lonely. He had lung cancer.

I remember, one day, we were all in his apartment, all of his descendants. It was as if we were all waiting for something. I did not know why, though, but everyone was sad. My uncle Richard and I had gone out to buy something. When we came back up, everybody was crying. I had asked what had happened. My uncle Steven, sitting on the couch with my two weeping sisters on either side of him, said softly, "Your grandfather is dead." The whole apartment seemed to tremble as everybody seemed to yell in their crying. My grandmother was sitting in the bedroom with her daughters. They were all crying. I felt weak, but I did not want to cry. I reached back to ~~the~~ table with my hand, but I had misjudged the distance. I stumbled. I sat down and floods of tears flowed out of my eyes. I think that I was the only male crying, but I was probably the only male that my grandfather had said <sup>THAT</sup> he loved. I love my grandfather. I will always remember him.